

**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

The invention provides an isolated Nope polypeptide, or functional fragment thereof, containing the amino acid sequence of a Nope polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:2), or  
5 a modification thereof. The invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a Nope polypeptide amino acid sequence referenced as SEQ ID NO:2, or a modification thereof. The invention additionally provides an isolated nucleic acid molecule containing the nucleotide  
10 sequence referenced as SEQ ID NO:1, or a modification thereof. The invention further provides methods of detecting Nope polypeptides and Nope nucleic acid molecules.